

ROUTES TO THE NORTH-WEST.

WE have read with more than usual interest the last report of Mr. Dawson, the Government Engineer, on the opening up of communication from Lake Superior to Fort Garry. The pamphlet is concise and lucidly written, and the excellent maps which accompany it, enable the reader to follow Mr. Dawson in his remarks with great ease and pleasure.

Mr. Dawson first gives his reasons for changing the wagon-road upon the first section of the line from Fort William. The Government road, which was commenced two or three years ago, was intended to lead to Dog Lake, and by this way reach the summit level; but for reasons which appear good and sufficient, the road has been turned at its eighth mile in a westerly direction, and will now go to Lake Shebandowan, and by Keshabow Lake, into Lac des Milles Lacs. The distance by this route from Fort William to Fort Garry is 431 miles, which is composed as follows:—

From Lake Superior to the navigable waters of the Summit region	40
From terminus of Lake Superior road to North-west angle of Lake of the Woods	311
North-west angle to Fort Garry	90
Total number of miles	441

Three modes are proposed of opening up communication between the two points. The first is a wagon road to the Summit region, an improvement of the navigation from there to the North-west angle of the Lake of the Woods, so as to do away with all except two portages, and thence by wagon road (90 miles) to Fort Garry. The second project is, a railway of 40 miles to the Summit region, improvements so as to make continuous navigation from there to the North-west angle of Lake of the Woods, and a railway at the other end to Fort Garry. The third scheme is, a continuous railway from some part of the Ottawa Valley direct to Fort Garry, which is afterwards to be continued across the Continent to the Pacific, and become the Canadian Pacific Railroad. We have little doubt that all of these projects will yet be carried out, and we believe also that this will be done in the order in which they have been mentioned.

The first one referred to above, the wagon-road and water route, is the one which the Government are now engaged in making. A considerable portion of the wagon-road has already been made at both ends, and the improvement of the navigation by means of dams, locks &c., is to be gone on with at once. It is hoped that next year will see this route opened, and we only regret that it cannot be completed this season. The distance by land and water by this route will be as follows:—

	LAND.	WATER.
Thunder Bay to Summit region	40	—
From there to French Portage	—	70
French Portage	2	—
Kiogaasikok Lake	—	15
Doux Rivieres Portage	2	—
From there to North-east angle of the Lake of the Woods	—	222
From there to Fort Garry	90	—

Total number of miles, 431 307

To open up this route in the manner proposed, Mr. Dawson calculates, with only cost \$24,700, or in round numbers, 220,000. This is comparatively a moderate sum. The outlay will be divided as follows: Lake Superior section (40 miles) \$94,800; Lake region (31 miles) \$79,300; Fort Garry section (90 miles) \$87,000—making the sum of \$247,700, given above. We entirely agree with Mr. Dawson that this is the route which should be first opened, fully recognizing that the second project, that of railways at both ends of the Lake region, must soon be entered upon. As the traffic increases, the two Portages on the water part of the route would be found a great trouble, and expense, not to speak of all of the carrying, which would require to be done. But with the iron horse at both ends, and continuous navigation by steamer through the entire Lake region, we could get along nicely for quite a number of years. To carry out the latter project, however, will cost a large sum compared with the humbler scheme now being proceeded with. Mr. Dawson calculates that the expense would be as follows:—

Railway from Lake Superior to navigable waters (40 miles)	\$1,600,000
Continuous navigation, improved by locks and dams (311 miles)	1,600,000
Railroad from end of Navigation to Fort Garry (90 miles)	2,700,000
Total expenditure	\$5,900,000

We might safely set the cost of the railway and water route at \$5,000,000—but we have no hesitation in saying that it must be speedily proceeded with. If the North-west is one-fifth as valuable as we conceive it to be, the sum of even six millions in opening up communication with it, will be money well spent. It is gratifying to know that the money now about to be spent in improving the navigation will not be lost, even when the wagon road is superseded, for the improvements proposed by Mr. Dawson will all be useful and needed when the larger project comes to be carried out.

As regards the third project—the railway direct from the Ottawa valley by the head of Nipigon Bay on Lake Superior, direct to Fort Garry—we need say little at present. The cost of such a road would be exceedingly large, and it will not likely be gone on with except as part of a great Canadian Pacific railroad, which will link the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

We conclude this article by again pressing on the Government the necessity of pushing forward the opening of the wagon road to the North-West, with all possible speed. This is the first route which must be opened, and as soon as it is done, Toronto and Montreal will be able to compete with St. Paul for the Red River trade. But the Government may as well consider it a foregone conclusion that the second project—that of joint railways and water communication—must be proceeded with at an early day, and make their calculations accordingly. The improvements of the water communication for the wagon route, should all be made with a view to the larger scheme, which we are sure cannot be delayed longer than two or three years. With such means of communication open, the greater portion of the North-West trade must inevitably fall into our lap.

THE HURON AND ONTARIO SHIP CANAL.

THE second Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on this subject, has been printed and is before us. It is brief, but comprehensive.

The Committee report that they have had under their consideration a full and comprehensive Report of Mr. William Sykes C.E., the resident engineer of the Canal Company; that Mr. Capreol submitted the proposal of a number of capitalists in the United States, to undertake one-half of the contract for the construction, taking in payment one-half of the capital stock of the Company—say twenty millions of dollars—provided the remaining half be undertaken by British or other contractors, and that the Company be aided by the grant of ten millions acres of land; that they were submitted letters from Messrs. John Hawkshaw and A. M. Rendell, eminent engineers of London, England, expressing confidence in the engineering practicability of the work, and from Mr. George Wythes, a prominent and reputedly wealthy contractor, offering to undertake the remaining half of the contract for construction, on the basis of the proposal of the United States capitalists; that there were submitted a number of letters from various parties, prominent and well informed in matters of finance, expressing confidently the opinion that in the present state of the English money market, the stock of the Company would be readily taken up, provided only—and not otherwise—that a grant of ten millions acres of land were made to the Company, and also that important evidence was received from Hon. G. Tupper, Walter Shanly, Esq., Hon. John Rose and Hon. James Skead.

The Committee report: "That they have no doubt as to the expediency of the proposed Canal. They are satisfied that, if constructed, it would be of immense value to the commercial and general interests of the Province of Ontario, and of the whole Dominion of Canada. The interests of Ontario would be greatly promoted by the local expenditure, and the development of the extensive region North and West of the Canal, and the interests of the Dominion by the introduction into the country of the large amount of capital, estimated at forty millions of dollars, required for its construction; by the encouragement of immigration; and by the completion of a most important link in the chain of through communication between the Great West and the Old World. The canal, if constructed, as it would be wholly within British territory, would be a most important key to the trade of the West and greatly conduce to the establishment and continuance of reciprocal trade between this Dominion and the

United States of America. Independently of these important national, commercial and social considerations, it is obvious to your committee that a large accession of revenue to the Dominion Exchequer from the construction of this work, as out of an expenditure of forty millions dollars chiefly for imported labor, a large amount must flow into the public chest through Customs and Excise. The testimony adduced before your committee has satisfied them that the work is practicable in an engineering point of view, but that unless a liberal grant of land be given in aid of the Company, the work, in the opinion of your committee, cannot be accomplished."

"The relations of the proposed canal to the North-West Territory, and the development of that extensive and valuable portion of the Dominion, are also, in the opinion of the committee, additional reasons for the undertaking of the work. The necessity for its use would also, it is believed, lead to an international system of Navigation Laws between this country and the United States which would be equally just to both, and largely stimulate the important industrial branch of ship-building in this Dominion. By means of its construction the River St. Lawrence, which is the natural highway between the Great West (now rapidly becoming the granary of the world, and the consumers of Europe, would be more used than at present. The consequence would be the necessary enlargement of the St. Lawrence Canals, and the acquisition to that noble river of the vast trade which nature intended it to have, but which the energy of man has hitherto, to a large extent, diverted through artificial channels in the neighbouring Republic. By means of the improvements suggested in the navigation of the St. Lawrence, and an improved system of international Navigation Laws, Canada would share, to a large extent, in the carrying trade of the world, and our Confederacy would be enriched by the stream of trade which would pass through our territory on its way to the ocean."

Minutes of evidence are appended to the Report. Dr. Tupper stated that in 1833, he had interviews with Mr. Hawkshaw and Mr. Rendell, both engineers of the highest standing in England, and who expressed their confidence in the feasibility and practicability of the undertaking. He had also communication with Mr. Wythes, whom he knew to be a man of immense wealth, who proposed in the event of the Government expressing a willingness to grant ten million acres of land, to send out engineers at his own expense to verify the reports of Mr. Sykes by actual survey. Dr. Tupper considered that the Government of the Dominion should make a grant of five million acres, a like quantity to be granted by the Ontario Government.

Hon Mr. Skead's evidence, though favouring the construction of the canal, if it could be shewn that it would promote local development or that of the Dominion, was to the effect generally that the canal would be comparatively useless, and would have the effect of drawing trade to New York via Oswego, rather than to the St. Lawrence route.

Mr W. Shanly considered that the project, if carried out, would undoubtedly result beneficially to the trade of the Lakes, and the commerce of the Dominion; and he concurred with the opinions of Messrs. Hawkshaw and Rendell that aside from the great cutting through "the ridges," there are no difficulties to be encountered greater than have already been encountered and overcome elsewhere. He also stated that he would term all the men whose names were attached to the proposal of certain persons in the United States to undertake one half of the contract for construction, as very strong men, as undertakers of large works.

Hon. John Ross considered the project as of the greatest importance to the trade and commerce of the whole of the Dominion, and that it was a work of sufficient importance to the public interests to entitle it to Legislative aid by a grant of land or otherwise. He also spoke in the highest terms of Messrs. Hawkshaw and Rendell, and of Mr. Wythes.

IMPORTANT MOVEMENT OF THE COTTON TRADE.

The Cotton Supply Association of Liverpool have adopted a resolution looking to the speedy development of railways in India, in order to facilitate the importation of cotton from that country. This course was taken in consequence of the insufficiency of the supply from the United States. The stock of the American cotton is not large enough to keep the mills of Lancashire fully engaged.